



The Sultan of Kedah whose Five Sons Were Married

THE sultan of Kedah, a funny little province in Siam not much larger than Rhode Island, has just witnessed the most magnificent wedding ceremony ever performed in the mystical land of the orient.

It takes twelve days to marry a prince; but the sultan of Kedah had five sons and he arranged for one wedding. Therefore it took sixty days. For sixty days—and one day more the people of Kedah had a vacation that was one continuous round of oriental gaiety and magnificence.

The whole of Kedah's population, from the wealthiest nabob to the humblest and most ragged beggar, were there as invited guests—and there are 30,000 subjects of the sultan of Kedah.

But the ceremony was so unique and the preparations on so great a scale that everybody in the Straits Settlements who could spare the time and money went to see it. So there were European guests from Bangkok, Singapore, Hongkong, and Canton, Malacca, and Colombo.

Guests Come on Elephants.

The event was of so much political importance that the king of Siam sent one of his sons, Prince Charan, as his personal representative. Prince Charan and his suite traveled overland from Bangkok on a troop of elephants, and added much to the splendors of the wedding ceremony by his presence.

The ceremonies began on June 14 with the wedding of Tunker Ibrahim, the crown prince, with his first cousin, Tunker Ayubah, daughter of the sultan's brother, the Rajah Muda of Kedah. Up to the morning of the first day's ceremony the crown prince had never seen his bride.

The first day opened with a solemn religious service, and at 4 o'clock in the afternoon the marriage ceremony was performed in public. That evening every subject of the sultan sat down to a marriage feast. Refreshment bars in the open air were ready night and day, free to everybody who was thirsty—and everybody was. The European guests, and the highest class natives were served in the palace.

Bridal Parties Visit Entire Province.

From the second to the seventh day a round of junketings was given, beginning as early as 9 o'clock in the morning and lasting till 1 o'clock the next morning. Each day there was a feast and each night fireworks. Stages were erected in all parts of the little province where free open air performances were given for the entertainment of the people. Each class of inhabitants—and there are Malays, Siamese, Hindus, and Chinese—had its own stage and its own favorite national performers.

While the common people were thus enjoying themselves the sultan entertained his royal and European guests with shooting parties, elephant hunts, and other more dignified entertainments.

On the eighth day the program was changed. A procession around the town entertained the crowd with all man-

The Chosen People Picking Enai to Sprinkle the Happy Brides.

ner of quaint and curious things. There were floats carried on the shoulders of men and made to represent grotesque birds and animals—each float carrying members of the Kedah royalty and some of the European guests.

After the procession came one of the interesting and most vital parts of the ceremony—the picking of the enai. This consisted of the entire procession passing seven times around a garden planted with gorgeous artificial flowers. Then the great ones, walking to the center of the garden,

Groom Waits Long to See Bride.

Two more days were given up to feasting and merry-making, and then on the thirteenth and last day came the most curious ceremony of all—the lime bath—a ceremony

picked handfuls of the leaves of the enai trees. These leaves were taken to the house of the bride and bridegroom, sprinkled over them, an address being delivered to each separately, for even as yet they had not seen each other.

The crown prince and his bride met for the first time on the tenth day of the ceremony. After their greeting they were carried through the town on a gorgeously gilded throne, borne by 200 natives.

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The Children of the Sultan of Kedah. MOST MAGNIFICENT WEDDING CEREMONY EVER PERFORMED How it Took 60 Days to Marry the Five Sons of the Sultan of Kedah

which filled the European women among the guests with consternation and indignation, for it left them drenched to the skin.

Lime Bath Surprises Europeans.

The celebration of the lime bath was held in a beautiful little pavilion surrounded by a high brick wall with only two gates, each of them guarded by soldiers. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon all the European guests were admitted to the pavilion, where the sultan and the whole royal family had assembled. Then the gates were locked and the ceremony began, the European women as yet ignorant of what was to follow.

The bride was carried into the pavilion and the bridegroom walked in supported by two princes. The bride and groom were seated together on a little platform in the center of the pavilion, dressed in silks and literally flashing with gems. When they were seated twelve Malay girls began walking round and round the couple, first on the highest step of the platform, then lower and lower until they reached the bottom and disappeared.

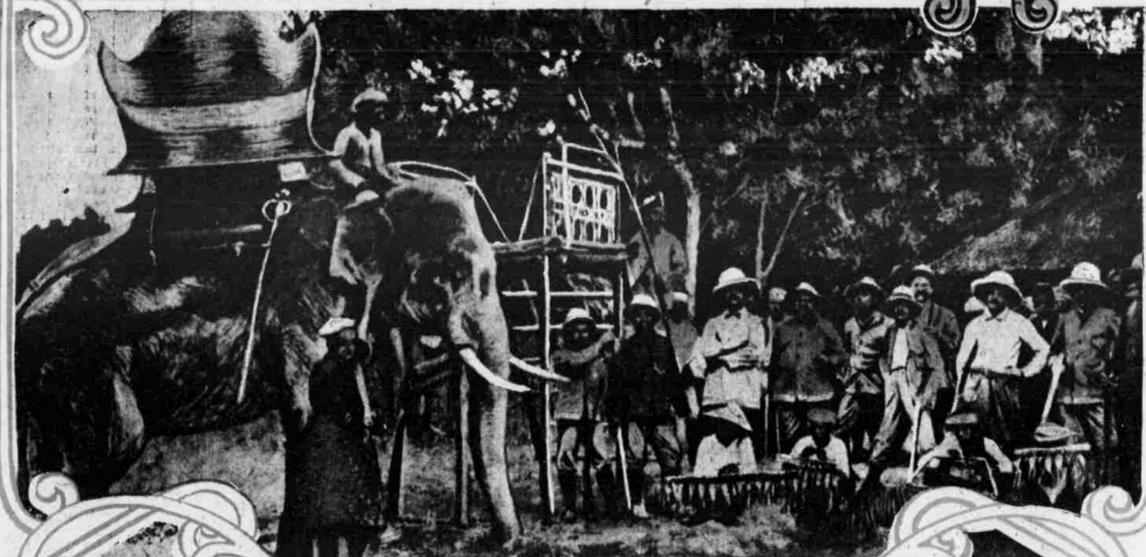
Two girls then mounted the platform and drew a curtain around the prince and his bride, concealing them from all present. Then the prince and his bride took off their silks and jewels and put on plain light garments, and the curtains were again drawn back. Without an instant's warning the two huge gilded serpents whose heads were raised high above the royal married pair began to belch out great volumes of lime water, drenching them to the skin.

Guests Drenched with Others.

Roars of laughter filled the pavilion which were quickly changed to shrieks of dismay when each native seized a bucket, filled it from great tubs of scented water, and proceeded to drench his neighbor with its contents. The European guests tried vainly to escape and while the natives were as careful as possible many a costly gown of silk was splashed with the scented water, which, however, as afterwards proved, left no discoloring stain.

That ended the ceremony. It might be supposed that everybody in Kedah was tired of feasting and merrymaking, but there were still four more princes to be married, and after a day of rest the ceremony began all over again. For forty-eight days longer the celebrations continued. Now peace and quiet once more rule in Kedah.

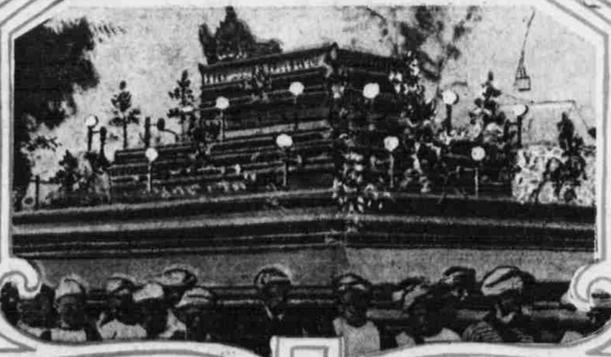
The Bridal Procession in Full Swing Going Round the Town



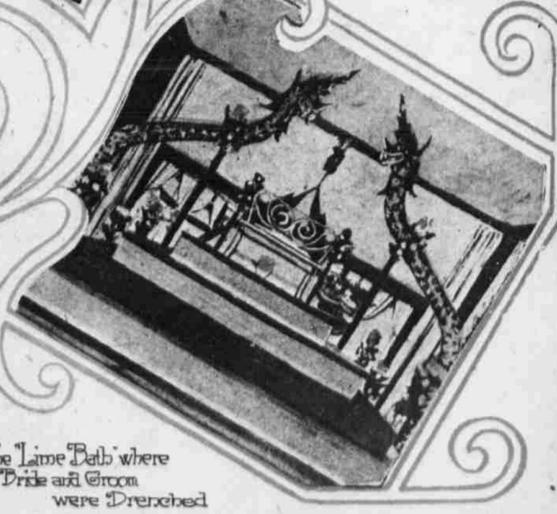
Shooting Party Arranged by the Sultan's Brothers to Amuse the Wedding Guests



The Throne on which the Happy Pairs were Carried through the town



The Lime Bath where the Bride and Groom were Drenched



One of the Strange Birds Carried Round the town

